ORSAM

HOW AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES COULD IRAQ BE SPLIT UP? BEING READY FOR THE WORST

IRAK HANGİ ŞARTLARDA, NASIL PARÇALANABİLİR?: EN KÖTÜYE HAZIRLIKLI OLMAK

العراق كيف وتحت اية ظروف يمكن ان يقسم؟ التحضير للاسوء

ORTADOĞU STRATEJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIC STUDIES
مركز الشرق الأوسط للدراسات الاستراتيجية

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History

In Turkey, the shortage of research on the Middle East grew more conspicuous than ever during the early 90's. Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) was established in Janu- ary 1, 2009 in order to provide relevant information to the general public and to the foreign policy community. The institute underwent an intensive structuring process, beginning to con- centrate exclusively on Middle Eastern affairs.

Outlook on the Middle Eastern World

It is certain that the Middle East harbors a variety of interconnected problems. However, ne- ither the Middle East nor its people ought to be stigmatized by images with negative connota- tions. Given the strength of their populations, Middle Eastern states possess the potential to activate their inner dynamics in order to begin peaceful mobilizations for development. Respect for people's willingness to live together, respect for the sovereign right of states and respect for basic human rights and individ- ual freedoms are the prerequisites for assuring peace and tranquility, both domestically and interna- tionally. In this context, Turkey must continue to make constructive contributions to the establishment of regional stability and prosperity in its vicinity.

ORSAM's Think-Tank Research

ORSAM provides the general public and decision-making organizations with enlightening in- for- mation about international politics in order to promote a healthier understanding of interna- tional policy issues and to help them to adopt appropriate positions. In order to present effective solutions, ORSAM supports high quality research by intellectuals and researchers that are com- petent in a variety of disciplines. ORSAM's strong publishing capacity transmits meticulous analyses of regional developments and trends to the relevant parties. With its website, books, reports, and periodicals, ORSAM supports the development of Middle Eastern literature on a national and international scale. ORSAM facilitates the sharing of knowledge and ideas with the Turkish and international communi- ties by inviting statesmen, bureaucrats, academicians, strategists, businessmen, journalists, and NGO representatives to Turkey.

* ORSAM is a member of the The Middle East Studies Association (MESA).

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İçindekiler

PRESENTATION

Although Iraq went through many major developments in 2011, she fell down to considerably low ranks in the Middle Eastern agenda also with the effect of Arab Spring. However, the inner mechanism of the unstable government, which could be formed only 9 months after the elections held on March 2010, established a ground for a silent crisis in Iraq. Although the government structure, which was agreed by 4 major coalitions coming through the election as a result of hard negotiations, mainly depends on the proportional representation of all the groups across the country in accordance with their powers; the aforesaid government did not please even especially the Prime Minister in the head of the government. To some extent, the national unity government, which was formed as it was the only formula the countries in the region and the U.S., as well as the political groups within Iraq, could come to an agreement, showed a performance way behind its promises for months. As the instability, violence and economic problems carry on in the country, the political parties mainly focused on pulling down one another. On the other hand, contrary to the expectations of many people; with the effect of the promise the U.S. President Barack Obama had given before he was elected and also as 2012 is election year in the U.S., Obama withdrew the U.S. troops in Iraq. Neither the countries in the region nor the Iraqi believed this withdrawal would take place. However, the fact that the withdrawal process of the U.S. was officially completed was not only symbol of the beginning of a new period in Iraq. The fact that an arrest warrant was issued for the Iraqi Vice-President Tariq al-Hashimi on account of the fact that he supported terrorist organizations following the withdrawal of the U.S. troops, caused a major crisis across the country. This crisis grew to such extent in a short time that the issue suggesting Iraq's splitting again came to the forefront in the region and world agenda. In such an environment, we thought that the subject had better be handled by ORSAM.

In the report written by Assist. Prof. Dr. Serhat Erkmen, the political problems Iraq might confront are handled in detail within the frame of possibilities. We believe that the study, which is supported by Tables and maps, will make a great contribution to arguments related to the future of Iraq. Therefore, we think that it will be useful to share this report with the public opinion.

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HOW AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES COULD IRAQ BE SPLIT UP? BEING READY FOR THE WORST

Executive Summary

The political crisis, which broke out in Iraq short while after the withdrawal of the U.S., brought up the political developments in Iraq in the shadow of the developments centering around the Arab Spring to the agenda again. The stability and future of Iraq started to be discussed both in Turkey and in world public opinion, and many possibilities ranging from good to bad was reassessed. The possibility of Iraq's splitting has been brought up to the agenda on Turkish news and comments as well, and the arguments related to the solution of political crisis taking place in Iraq also started to be reflected in the press.

It is not right to expect this dynamic and ambiguous process in Iraq to immediately turn into a big crisis in country in a short time. However, as all the developments taking place since the U.S. invasion of Iraq have showed over and over again, Iraq is becoming a country, which is getting hard to protect the territorial integrity and political unity with each passing day. It would be good to think the situation outside the box, rather than making simple predictions related to the future of Iraq, whose state authority was destroyed and where a healthy structure could not be established instead, and giving short answers to the question.

In this study, Iraq's future is strived to be handled within the framework of the current developments in the country and the socio-political structure of the country. At the end of the study, the resulting table shows that there are 4 interrelated possibilities on the future of Iraq. Analyzing these scenarios, each of which are handled within the study, is increasing reasons for being pessimistic about the future of Iraq more and more with each passing day.

Introduction

The political crisis, which broke out in Iraq right after the U.S. withdrawal, brought up the political developments in Iraq, which had been overshadowed by the events developing within the framework of the Arab Spring for a while, to the agenda again. Both in Turkey and also in world public opinion, the stability and future of Iraq started to be discussed again, and many possibilities ranging from good to bad started to be reassessed. The possibility of a split in Iraq was brought up to the agenda in Turkish press and comments as well, and arguments related to the solution of the political crisis in Iraq started to be reflected in the press.

It is not right to expect this dynamic and ambiguous process in Iraq to turn into a big crisis across the country in a short period of time. Nevertheless, as all the developments, which have taken place since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, have shown over and over again; Iraq has become a country whose territorial integrity and political unity is becoming more difficult to protect with each passing day. It will be more useful to evaluate the situation from a larger perspective, rather than giving short responses to the question by making simple predictions on the future of Iraq, where the State authority was abolished and a new healthy structure could not be somehow rebuilt. Therefore, we have tried to make an analysis of possibilities by considering the current political conjuncture in Iraq, and the historical and political structure of the country. By all means, these possibilities can take different forms by the inclusion of some unanticipated variables. However, the general parameters, which are identified based on the developments taking place within the last 8 years, make it easier to have an idea about the future of the country. Within this framework, in the light of basic facts and actors, which form the skeleton of the political developments in Iraq, 4 different but also interrelated future scenarios have come up. None of these scenarios should be handled as right or wrong on its own, but rather, they should be interpreted as roughly marking out certain cases. The maps, which are used due to the urgency of the issue, are not extremely detailed ones. However, in the forthcoming days, it will be possible to take it further with more detailed studies.

During this study, the key factors, which are believed to shape the future of Iraq, will be as follows: the functioning of the political institutions established in the aftermath of the invasion in the country; nature and level of the acts of violence; functioning of the security forces; to what extent the political parties and groups recognized the State authority; the functioning of the Constitution Amendment process, and the policies of the external powers. Considering the future of Iraq in the light of these factors, two main categories, each of which could reach different dimensions in itself, emerge, namely the Continuation of the Current Situation, and the Split.

1. Scenarios on the Continuation of the Current Situation in Iraq

The major axis of the scenario on continuation of the current situation in Iraq is to ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq, and for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to continue its existence under the umbrella of Iraq. On the other hand, the fact that it is not known how Iraq, whose political structure is still in a transitional stage, will overcome the severe political crisis in the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal; and what kind of assembly and government will substitute the the assembly and government formed after the 2010 election, shows that the current system could go through some changes even if the major axis carries on.

Based on the major axis above, the current situation of Iraq could be described as follows: Iraq is a country, who ensures the territorial integrity, but also whose central government does not have authority in the north (1), goes through troubles in the middle of the country, and becomes strong in the southern provinces, where the Shi'ite are in the majority; also who could not settle the disputes in itself; where the political competition between ethnical and religious groups has turned turned into intergroup hostility also with the effect of historical reasons; and also which is in a transition period open to the effects of external powers to a large extent.

In this respect, while considering the future of Iraq, it could be suggested that this transition period could have different stages; *and therefore the split has not taken place in the scenario on the continuation of the current situation yet; but it includes all the scenarios*

with almost on the verge of a critical phase from different aspects. Within this framework, the scenario on the continuation of the current situation could be handled within the scope of four different contexts:

1.a. Iraq With A Strong Central Structure

Iraq with a strong central structure is Iraq; which is governed by a federal system; which has reinforced / is in tendency to reinforce the central structure with the constitutional amendments to be made; and where stable and functioning government exists. Currently, it cannot be said for Iraq to have a powerful central structure, or to have a powerful government representing this structure. Although the 2010 election resulted in the victory of 3 centrist coalitions (lists), the conflict among the political parties and the problems in power sharing do not establish an environment, where centralism could be powerful. On the contrary, the fact that the central government turns into a pressure tool that whomever controls it holds the power, increases decentralist tendencies among the groups that cannot control the central government. As a matter of fact, first of all the Iraqi Kurdish objected to centralism, and established their own federal districts. Between 2005 and 2009, Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (then to Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq) strongly argued for an idea of a Basra-based federal district (This suggestion is still brought to agenda from time to time). And right after the invasion, most of the Sunni Arabs objected to federal districts and federalism. Nevertheless, as Baghdad is always under the control of the Shi'ite Arabs, and as the Sunni Arabs in Salahaddin, Diyala and Anbar started to believe that they cannot change the government despite the fact that they won the election; they have started to demand for their own federal districts for the last 6 months.

As a matter of fact, this approach stems from the characteristics of centralist tradition in

Iraq. The ones, who have been controlling the central government since the establishment of the Iraqi state, have tried to have an absolute authority over the other political groups. Therefore, the problem is not to be against or in favor of centralism, but rather the problem is about who has the centralist power and for what purposes it will be used. All the political groups are in favor of centralism except for the Kurds, but when they cannot control it, they challenge the one who controls the central power, and they want to stay out of its jurisdiction. In the light of the recent developments, it can be foreseen that the Sunni Arabs, who started to argue for federalism today, will change their policies; if the parliamentary arithmetics and the government structure change, despite the fact that demands for federal district have increased in certain provinces, where many Sunni Arabs live. However, the Shi'ite group to lose the power this time, could argue for the federal demands. In brief, today, despite all its problems, centralism in Iraq is still the most powerful tendency across the country. This situation can also be seen in pre-election promises and policies of al-Iraqiya and State of Law Coalition, which are the first two lists winning the election. At this point, the problem is not to establish the idea of centralism, but instead, not to be able to establish a strong central government. In Iraq, a strong central government could get stronger in such ways in short and medium terms:

1.a.1. Strengthening the Central Government Through Democratic Methods:

The 2005 Iraqi Assembly, in which Islamist Shi'ite Arabs and the Kurdish were extremely powerful, the actual representatives of the Sunni were scarcely any, and many different groups were found, was substituted by a new Assembly, in which Sunni Arabs were strongly represented, Shi'ite Arabs seemed divided, the Kurds power was weakened, and the number of parties was declined, following the 2010 election.

Even though the political formations with strong centralist character such as Hiwar, Wifak, Dawa and Ahrar Bloc increased their numbers; tough bargains and the problem on power sharing between the Shi'ite and the Sunni in the formation process of the government made it almost impossible for a government, which could make constitutional amendments that would strengthen the central structure, to be created. Just like the role, played by the Kurdish for the formation and continuation of the government, took the Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki hostage; it will take him hostage again if the Prime Minister changes. Therefore, strengthening an Iraqi central government through democratic methods is only possible if a nationalist Arab coalition, which is so strong to exclude the Kurdish, wins the election. It can be possible either by a big Arab party coalition's winning so many seats to form government alone, or a single party's winning so many seats to form government alone. If this party or coalition happens to be a nationalist and centralist formation, it can reject Kurds' approaches on federalism, oil and borders and resort to legal and legitimate fight against them. It can also exclude the Kurdish groups on important issues by ignoring different concerns, which currently establish balance through amendments it can make on legislation.

However, this possibility does not seem realistic for two reasons. The first one of these reasons is the fact that there is no such strong political formation, which could do politics under the "Arab" identity, and also which could ignore the sectarian dimension. Even though all the parties or electoral alliances state that they are against sectarianism, both their political stances and their identifying the "other" actually gives a very clear idea on their sectarian attitudes. Therefore, the impossibility of formation of a party or a coalition only with a centralist discourse by ignoring the Sunni and Shi'ite Arab fact and under the umbrella of being Iraqi excludes the possibility above. Even if Sunni and Shi'ite Arab, which literally argue

for centralism, are two different formations; as they consider each others as the real threat, in the current system they see each others as rivals, and they search for the support of the Kurds in order to become stronger within the system. This situation would prevent the exclusion of the Kurds on a vital subject such as centralism. And the second reason is the related to the current constitution. Even in case a state of emergency comes up and all the Arab parties come together (let's say that it happened for a moment even if it is not possible), the fact that the constitutional amendment cannot be made in case two thirds of the provinces says no in accordance with the Article 136, Section 2 of the Iraqi Constitution, makes it impossible in Iraq to eliminate the federal government and to establish a total centralist structure. Because such an amendment would certainly be rejected in Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, and Arbil.

1.a.2. Strengthening the Central Government Through An Armed Conflict

In Iraq, the politics is still done under the shade of weapons. The only party without a separate armed group among the parties with a considerable power in the Assembly, - if we consider the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), which embodied the Badr Brigades until recently, separate – is the Islamic Dawa Party. On the other hand, the Islamic Dawa Party uses the advantage of being in the government and takes the advantage of official powers of the Iraqi state, and it composes a politico-military force, affiliated to the party by establishing a special unit from Ministry of Interior. This unit, which is directly affiliated to Nouri al-Maliki, carries out any operation it wants in any place in the country outside the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and nobody calls it to account.

In Iraq, the relation between political parties or power groups and armed groups makes it possible for the acts of violence, which con-

siderably decreased between 2008 and 2010, to increase again depending on the political atmosphere in the country. However, this armed conflict within this scenario could differ from an armed conflict, which could create a chaotic atmosphere by surrounding the country, in certain aspects.

In this scenario, the major axis of the armed conflict is that the powers in favor of centralism in Iraq go into combat with an explicit or a secret coalition against separatist groups, and that these powers have victory by far at the end of this conflict and make the authority of Baghdad dominant over the whole Iraq. Currently, the Iraqi army and police do not have enough capacity to cope with the separatist groups. It cannot be suggested that these forces are ready to this in terms of weapon, equipment, training and doctrine. Besides, the fact that the U.S. completed its withdrawal period eliminated the possibility that such a conflict could be prevented by another force in the country, to a great extent. Thus, if the force, which is controlled by the central government, "feels ready", it can gradually launch this conflict. However, such a use of violence, which will aim at gathering the central authority under a single roof, could emerge depending on these following conditions that are roughly summarized:

• If large-scale incidents, which would cause the security forces to lose their concentration and energy, do not take place outside Iraq,
• If a the political conjuncture is appropriate, and if it is based on a valid cause (declaration of independence, annexation of Kirkuk to KRG, large-scale and continuous terrorist attacks across the country),
• If the power (Sunni or Shi'ite Arab, or their coalition), which wants to establish the full authority of the central government, forms a large-scale military and political coalition on its own or with the others,
• If the countries in the region explicitly take sides with the central government, or if they do not protect the separatist/federalists.

It seems a quite remote possibility that each of these factors happen all at once. First of all, due to the reasons mentioned in the previous point, it does not seem quite possible for the parties in favor of centralism to establish a powerful union among themselves. In fact the recent political developments show that whether Sunni or Shi'ite, whichever makes this move, it is a high possibility that they will conflict with each others before the KRG. (In the light of the currently developments, the most probable situation is that Maliki first of all weakens the power of the Sunni by receiving support from the other Shi'ite parties and then he heads towards KRG if he is strong enough.) In addition to this, winds of change in the Middle East, and the power struggle among the countries in the region does not show that they agree on Iraq. On the contrary, no matter which Iraqi power launches such an operation, it will face the opposition of certain countries. Therefore, considering the current regional and territorial conditions, establishing centralism in the country through a military operation to be launched in order to establish the full authority of the central government will most probably lead to a chaotic environment that will possibly result in civil war or external intervention. Thus, the possibility that this scenario becomes reality is also low.

1.a.3. Establishing Centralism By Using the Means within the System

In a sense, this scenario is a kind of product of the first two scenarios. This scenario is based on the political rise of forces, which do not want strengthening of centralism in the country, but despite rising their powers in assembly and in government, their not establishing centralism by using the authority and domain of the government only through legal procedures; and also, on the fact that the Iraqi politics' putting its military forces into action in various ways by its very nature. In this scenario, the political powers, which want to strengthen the central structure,

might progress step by step by using military and police forces without creating large-scale conflicts, but also based on certain grounds (for instance acting upon the complaints of the local people, and preventing small-scale local conflicts and incidents) in problems between the central government and federal government(s). It seems that for some time now these grounds have been used by the Iraqi government in some villages, districts and rural areas of Diyala, Mosul, Salahaddin and Kirkuk; and progress has been made in certain regions, which were under the control of peshmergas beforehand; and that the Iraqi army was deployed in disputed areas by removing peshmergas. This scenario can come true if small-scale local tensions take place in different regions of Iraq, but also, if the government overcomes these tensions and re-build its authority through salami technique again. One of the most important dimensions of this scenario is the requirement for an intense support of the countries in the region, the U.S., and UN behind the centralist powers. It should be underlined that this is the most probable scenario that could strengthen centralism in Iraq.

Basic scenarios on the possible developments in order to increase centralism have been handled above. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that centralism could create two main problems regardless how:

(a) With the strengthening of the central authority, the problem of who will control the central government will come to forefront: The question of who will have the control over the power in Iraq, who has tried to strengthen her central authority since the establishment, but who could not exactly achieve it, is extremely critical. Although realizing this process through democratic ways seems to be like a better scenario; it should be kept in mind that it is a risky process, which cannot be controlled in terms of its consequences. In each possibility, the most important questions is that who will be in power. The most

reasonable response to this questions is that there could be a centralist Shi'ite coalition in Iraq.

Even though the ideal scenario is to include all the groups such as Turkmen, Arab, Kurd, Christian, Sunni, Shi'ite, which want to strengthen the centralist structure of Iraq; this is a weak possibility. Therefore, the process of the rise of central power paradoxically embodies a dynamic, which would lead to new conflicts and splits in Iraq. The realization of the most ideal scenario depends on the Iraqi political groups' maturing in political terms, and also on the pressure of the countries in the region to establish a balance, which would melt all kinds of internal conflicts within the frame of centralism.

(b) The second problem of the scenario of strengthening the centralism considerably depends on the process: KRG would react against the fact that the majority of its rights were taken away. Therefore, limiting the rights of KRG to a great extent, or formation of a very weak federalism can be possible only through use of force. Even in this case, it can be suggested that Kurds would not recognize this process, could launch armed struggle, and also they would want back their gains by putting a stronger emphasis on independence. And this means the end of scenarios related to the continuation of the current situation.

1. b. Iraq with a Weak Central Structure

This scenario is based on the increase of political conflict between different ethnical, sectarian and ideological groups in the country, and on the lack of a stable authority in the center, in case the conditions indicated above are not fulfilled. The difference of this scenario from fragility and the chaos is based on the fact that the Iraqi, who do not want to conflict with each others or who are tired of conflicting, want to be organized as powerful federal districts around a weak central government. *The central government in Iraq can be weaker*

than its current situation in two ways: either through the sides' voluntary preferences and their own wills without any conflict, or after the conflict is stopped upon the pressure from others following a small-scale internal conflict.

1.b.1. The Parties' Weakening the Centralism on Their Own Wills

Political interests and economic income come first among the major causes of the conflicts between the political groups in Iraq. Therefore, it can be suggested that some Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs and Kurds, who are satisfied with the incomes of the regions they live in, who believe that the others place burden, or who try to get rid of the pressure of the central government, prefer weakening the center, rather than strengthening them. While doing so, these groups, which put forth the pressures the previous regimes implemented in Iraq, can claim that the same centralist attempt gave damage to them in the new. Furthermore, political circles, which established their supremacy in each district, do not want an external political power to begin to develop on their territories. Besides, in case this political power is combined with economic income, each group might not be willing to share the incomes, gained by the natural resources in their own districts, with another district. Therefore, an Iraqi scenario, which prefers organizing around a weak federal structure instead of staying in the clutches of heavy bureaucracy of the central government, could come up. However, it can be said that there are three major obstacles before this scenario: unequal distribution of natural resources among districts, Iraq's historical heritage and the attitude of the countries in the region.

The majority of Iraq's petroleum reserves is located around Basra Basin in the south of country, and around Kirkuk, on the north. New places in different regions could be added to these reserves. However, the table of the current situation shows that a stronger federalism (ethnical or geographical) and the fed-

eral districts with their current borders will deprive the Sunni Arabs of a major income. Despite the allegations that there is oil in regions, where Sunni Arabs live, as well; the fact that this allegation has not been proved and hasn't been functioning yet, could lead them to be the group that will be damaged the most in such a strong federal system. Therefore, it is highly probable for the groups, which will be in search of a federal district among Sunni Arabs, to go through an intense conflict especially with Kurds on the provincial borders, where oil fields are located. (Haneqin and Qaratepe neighborhood in Diyala, Tuzhurmatu neighborhood in Salahaddin, Sheykhan and Hamdaniye in the north of Mosul, and the regions in Kirkuk, where oil fields are located.)

The historical heritage of the country prevents the groups from heading towards a strong federalism on their own. Especially the region with the Arab population in Iraq still believes that it is an Arab state, and that the Kurdish reached the current level by taking advantage of the weakness of the state. Therefore, in fact, many of them think that the current situation is temporary. It is not right, if this current situation carries on. Especially the KRG's attempts to expand in provinces such as Mosul, Kirkuk, and Diyala; and KRG's expanding its field of authority to these territories are not approved.

The influence of the countries in the region is extremely important as well. The fact that the states, which are concerned about the possibility that a weak federalism in Iraq could lead the country to split up, lead the political groups in Iraq and their cooperation with each others weakens the scenario of a weak central government and a powerful federation.

1.b.2. Stopping the Conflict Before It Expands

A small-scale internal conflict can take place in Iraq based on one of the reasons indicated above. Regardless of the reasons or dimen-

sion of the conflict, the continuation of the internal conflicts depends on the attitudes of the foreign countries, especially on the attitudes of the neighboring countries. For instance, one of the most important factors differing Iraq and Yugoslavia from each others is the fact that the conflict extended in Yugoslavia, as there was no such powerful regional governments to prevent the expansion effects of the conflict and to stop the conflict, when the Yugoslav civil war broke out. Moreover, the attempts for independence in Kosovo could be succeeded for a similar reason. Nevertheless, the neighboring countries of Iraq are regional powers, which are strong and could resort to military force if necessary, unlike the ones in the Balkans. Despite the lack of a complete strategy union among these countries, it can be suggested that they agree on protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq. Therefore, the conflict can be stopped before it leads to split of the country through direct or indirect interventions of the countries in the region, in case Iraq is dragged into an internal conflict. The parties, who want to maintain the conflict, can put an end to their wills to continue the conflict through suggestions, pressure or threats of the countries in the region. However, this possibility is based on a hypothesis, according to which Iraq's neighboring countries will maintain their cooperation on ensuring the territorial integrity of Iraq, even in case a possible internal conflict. On the other hand, on this subject, especially Iran's policies should not be completely relied on. Iran can change her strategic approach, when she thinks that it is inevitable for Iraq to be split up in order to control the north of Persian Gulf, and to have a powerful Shi'ite ally that stands on the oil field. Generally, the difference between Iranian and Iraqi Shi'ism creates an hypothesis that there will a competition between the two, in case two separate and neighboring Shi'ite states are established. Nevertheless, if the conflict and split in Iraq becomes inevitable, probably, Iran might have to control this split or to tolerate it for a certain period of time. Therefore,

instead of developing a hostile relationship, or a relationship model that is based on competition, with the new Shi'ite state, which could be created; she can find it strategically appropriate to draw the new Shi'ite state besides herself, by preferring a method that is based on consensus and cooperation. The fact that it is highly possible for the new Shi'ite state to be excluded because of the fear of Shi'ite, which would prevail in Sunni Arab states in Persian Gulf, in Saudi Arabia in particular, will increase the Shi'ite state's need for Iran. In this context, it highly probable for the new Shi'ite Arab state, which could appear if Iraq is split up, to cooperate with Iran; instead of struggling with the Sunni and enemy Arab states on its own.

1.c. Fragile and Unstable Iraq:

Even today, Iraq is described as "fragile" by many notable organizations in the West. Considering that the country could have come out of the internal conflict between 2005-2008 without being split and relatively less damaged, and that it has been tried to be purified from violence since then, it can be suggested that the country is in a better shape in political and economic terms. On the other hand, many specialist share the same opinion on the argument that this process is not based on concrete grounds; that turning back to past is possible; and thus, it is necessary to be vigilant in Iraq.

The most important points, differing the scenario of Iraq's being dragged into a fragile and unstable situation from the current situation could be listed as follows:

(a) The end of understanding that the political problems could be overcome through dialogue,

(b) The rise of political tension across the country, and realization of the problems, which are considered to be possible to emerge,

(c) The increasing belief that there will be no solution for the problems, which have been expected to be solved for a while.

Considering within this framework, it can be suggested that the scenario of a fragile and unstable Iraq is actually the previous stage of an Iraq, which is dragged into a civil war and chaos; and that the duration of this process will not be known. Although a certain prediction on the length of this process cannot be made; it can be suggested that it could last for 1-5 years depending on the magnitude of the conflict and the current regional dynamics of the Middle East.

In a fragile and unstable Iraq, there could be a political environment, where:

(a) the government, which is formed as a result of the new elections, cannot enact law; the government cannot fulfill its functions; the Assembly does not work; the political consensus cannot be reached; the legitimacy of the elections and assembly is questioned and even not recognized,

(b) conflicts emerge and increase between the actors such as Sunni Arabs and Kurds, Shi'ite Arabs and Sunni Arabs, government forces and peshmergas, government forces and the resistants etc.; but also where the process has not gotten out of control of the government; and where solution for the problems of the parties are sought within the current constitutional order,

(c) the problem of constitutional amendments could not be somehow solved due to the fact that the Assembly cannot work; where the Kirkuk problem is aggravated; the tension in Mosul hits the ceiling; and where tension among the groups in Diyala increases,

(d) the groups, which react against the fact that the promises given were not kept as the assembly does not work, were isolated from the political process; and where they intensely turned back to armed struggle.

Today, in case the political atmosphere in Iraq continues, the Hashimi Crisis is not solved, the acts of violence increases, and the showdown between Maliki-Iraqiya-Kurds turns into a government crisis; it can be suggested that the most probable future before Iraq could take place within the frame of the umbrella above.

1.d. Civil War and Chaotic Environment:

This scenario describes an environment, where the fragility reaches the maximum level; and where the country is on the verge of split. Therefore, the current situation is the last ring of the scenario. It is possible that this scenario, which could be realized upon the expansion of the conflict emerging in a certain part of the country, or upon the simultaneous outbreak of some conflicts, can end in four ways:

• The country can be split up,
• The central government can predominate and establish its authority.
• Although the decentralized powers are successful, they might not split up, and have new gains,
• The countries in the region or the international organizations can intervene in the situation and create a new situation in Iraq.

Although it is not possible to make a certain prediction on how and where the conflicts, which would drive the country into civil war, will begin; some predictions could still be made: The conflicts, which will drive Iraq into a civil war, may have two centers: the north and central parts of the country.

North-centric conflict could have three main geographical centers: Mosul, Kirkuk and Diyala.

Recently, the dispute between Kurds and Sunni Arabs in Mosul has already turned into a conflict. However, it remains limited. The

success of al-Hadba, which was gained in the region both in 2009 Provincial Council elections and 2010 General Elections, encouraged Arabs. Before the 2010 election, the incidents grew denser, when Athil Nuceyfi the Governor of Mosul was not allowed in certain villages, under the control of the Kurdish. However, after the elections, pro-conflict discourse of Nuceyfis fell into decline. Therefore, considering the places, which could launch the conflict within the frame of the current dynamics, Mosul relatively remains in the background.

And Kirkuk maintains its characteristics of being a potential conflict area. The fact that the conflicts were launched in Kirkuk, which is identified as a smaller model of Iraq, carries the potential of expansion due to the ethnical and sectarian structure of this province. However, Diyala is the province, which seems to be the most complex one. Diyala, which gathers all the conflict areas in Iraq in a single melting pot, is located in a quite sensitive position. Diyala, which contains the most sensitive facts such as Kurds' effort to expand in Haneqin; the move fight between the Iraqi army and the peshmergas; the continuation of the Shi'ite-Sunni conflict; the operations of the al-Qaida groups; pressures on the Turkmen; nationalist Sunni Arabs' desire to remove the Kurdish from the region; and petroleum and natural gas reserves, could be the place in Iraq, where the conflicts break out. However, it should also be underlined that: a conflict, which would break out from Kirkuk, could expand faster and easier, both due to its geographical position and due to the character of conflict. Therefore, while the conflict would remain local and there would be chance to cool the conflict, if it takes place in Diyala and Mosul; it would be much more difficult to suppress a large-scale conflict that could emerge in Kirkuk.

The second alternative, which would drag Iraq into civil war, is Baghdad-centered. The possibility that the power struggle, which

stems from controlling the state politics between Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs, could turn into a conflict again like between the years 2006 and 2007 should not be underestimated. Today, even though most of the political groups in Iraq say that "there is no turn back to years 2006-2007"; it appears that they secretly prepare themselves for a conflict.

It is not hard to predict that such a conflict will last extremely long and be quite bloody, once it breaks out. Considering former ethnical and sectarian conflicts in the Middle East, it was observed that the struggle between the parties turned into a representative war, in which countries in the region also took part, in time. This situation shows that sometimes a long-lasting conflict cycle comes up, beyond the own free will of wars. In case this possibility, the details of which will be handled below, becomes real; the conflicting parties might want to stay away from split in cases, when they cannot ensure their gains, and when their situation will get much worse with the pressure of the countries in the region. Therefore, Sunni Arabs, who would not like to come under the rule of the Sunni Arab countries through split; Shi'ite-Arabs, who would draw reaction of the states in the south and who would be pressed for being so close to Iran; and Kurds, who think that it would be hard to live because of the pressure that could be created by Iran-Turkey-Syria, and that they could face a new "Mahabad" event/scenario, might not go to split. However, after that point, it is a quite remote possibility that the conflict does not lead to split as a result of the groups' own preferences.

2.1. The End of the Current Situation: Scenarios of a Split Iraq

The scenario of a split could be a product of a chaotic environment, which was handled above to a great extent, and which will take place along with civil war. However, even in case of a split, how and under the control of which groups the country will be split raises

a question mark in minds. Into how many pieces Iraq will be split will depend on where the conflicts, which will create a chaotic environment, will start. While the split, which will start from the center, will cause the split of the country into three or more pieces; a chaotic environment, which would start from the north, could result in the split of country into two parts, at least in the first stage. In this case, outbreak of conflicts all over the country should not be expected.

In case the conflicts start from the north (at least in the beginning), it can be suggested that the actual conflict areas will be limited with the line, starting from Sincar towards the north of Mosul, and the northern and eastern

parts of Kirkuk and Diyala. *The state of possibility and conflict, which has been mentioned above, is roughly displayed on the map below. At this point, the most important thing to be reminded is the fact that the scenarios on split are totally fictional, and that the possible attitudes of the actors are totally based on logical deductions. Besides, although it is known that the attitudes of the actors cannot be as mechanic as the narrations below; the possible process is handled in a mechanic style in order to be able to give a rough summary related to the course of developments.*

1. Map of Iraq Split into Two Parts and
2. Possible Engagement Areas

Map of Iraq Split into Two Parts and Possible Engagement Areas
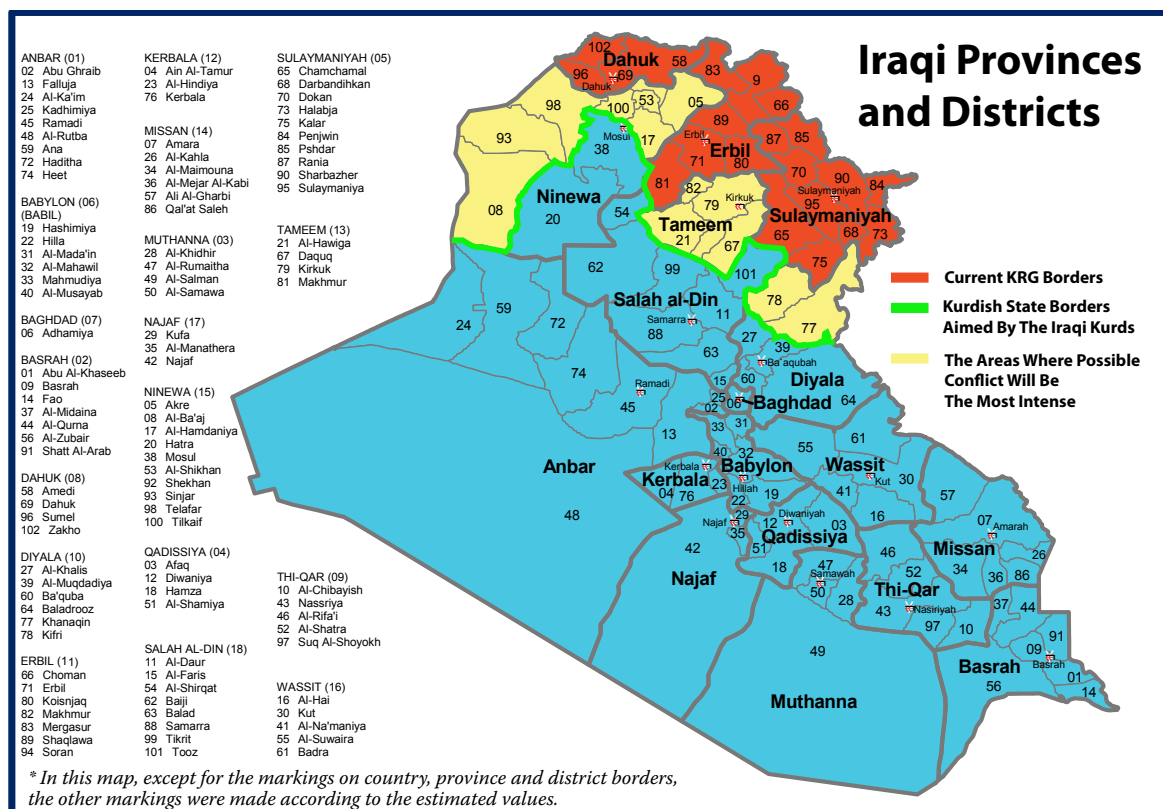
An environment of conflict, which would trigger Iraq's splitting into two parts, would probably break out in the geography, which is called as "disputed territories" today in the north of the country and poses problem mostly between Kurds and Arabs, but also

where the Turkmen live as well. The formation of an atmosphere, which would split the country into two parts, could stem from mutual attacks that might take place between Sunni Arabs and Kurds in provinces of Mosul, Kirkuk and Salahaddin, intense migration

pressure, and from political powers' ignoring one another and trying to use force on others' domains; but it can also result from the oil law signed between the central government and the KRG, the status of Kirkuk, the Iraqi army's deploying in the "disputed territories" and removing Kurds, or from decreasing the amount of money, which is allocated for Kurds, in the budget to a considerable extent. Regardless of which reason it is, in an atmosphere that will lead the country to split into two parts, the actual conflicting parties will be Kurds and Arabs. At this point, the possibility that the actual field of conflict could take place in regions, where the Turkmen live, such as Mosul, Kirkuk, Tuzhurmatu and the north and east of Diyala, is quite high. Therefore, what kind of attitude the Turkmen will adopt in a possible conflict environment, is extremely important. The Turkmen, who have been in favor of Iraq's territorial integrity up till today, can act together with Arabs, if the possibility of Iraq's splitting becomes real. However, if they do so, they might give many losses by directly becoming a party of conflict.

On the other hand, the possibility of Iraq's splitting up in two parts might lead Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs to put the disputes with each others and/or among themselves aside, and lead the Sunni-Shi'ite nationalist Arab groups to conflict with Kurds. In such a case, no matter whivh groups controls the central government in Iraq, they could engage in combat with Kurds. This group might even be the Dawa Party, whose entity and effectiveness in the north is limited under normal circumstances, or the Sadr Movement. In case one of these Shi'ite centralist parties comes to power in a period, when the conflict breaks out, or it becomes the leading actor of the balance in Baghdad; its conflicting with Kurds would not be surprising, in fact it could be a high possibility. The Kurdish have enough power to deal with Arabs, due to heavy weapons Kurds obtained after the invasion, their experience of organization, the experience and field in-

formation they gained during guerrilla war. Besides, they could think that UN or other international organizations can intervene in the situation if they can maintain such a conflict as long as possible; and they could also think that the extension of conflict can be in favor of them. Therefore, they would like to carry the conflict to an international platform and they would like to receive the support of the West in particular. In addition to this, they would also like to reach independence in the aftermath of the conflict, thanks to the support of the U.S. or some EU countries. On the other hand, Arabs would want to prevent other countries from intervening in the country by emphasizing that this problem is related to Iraq's internal affairs. However, in case such a conflict breaks out, it can be suggested that the field of conflict will be manipulated by the countries in the region, and that there will be an environment, where everyone settles their accounts with one another rather than a siding.

At this juncture, another point, which should be indicated, is the position the external powers will take in the face of a possible split. Although actors such as the countries in the region, the U.S., European countries, Russia and China claim that they argue for Iraq's territorial integrity, they will most probably change their attitudes when the country comes to the splitting point. The allegation that external powers will use military force together and coordinately in order to prevent Iraq from splitting is most probably only a discourse. The probability that the countries, who will not perceive direct and vital threats from the split of Iraq, follow wait and see policy rather than resorting to military operation; and that they prepare themselves for a post-conflict situation by taking position according to circumstances, is higher. The countries, who will be damaged the most as a result of the split of Iraq, are Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Jordan does not have enough military force to intervene. Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia invested billions of dollars in military

spendings, she neither has enough capacity to carry out cross-border operation nor has she an appropriate geography for this operation. And Syria cannot make any move due to her current situation. There only remains Turkey as a country, who has both military operation power and a major threat perception. At this point, the attitude of the U.S. is extremely important. The U.S., who withdrew its troops from the country after the outbreak of conflict, would not probably open up to the idea of inviting their troops to the region, in order not to have loss of lives. However, even if the U.S. intervenes in the situation, it would lead a peace force mission, which will settle between as a buffer force; and the end of such

a peace force would probably result in the establishment of a Kurdish state in the state, as in Kosovo.

Another situation, which would make the possibility of Iraq's splitting into two parts real, is the parties' reaching agreement without any conflict. Such an environment can take place, in case Baghdad becomes weak, and involves in internal turmoils that it cannot intervene in regional government in the north. However, the petroleum reserves in Mosul, Kirkuk and Diyala, in disputes territories between Kurds and Arabs considerably lowers the possibility of a split without conflict.

Map of Iraq Split into Three Parts and Possible Engagement Areas

* In this map, except for the markings on country, province and district borders, the other markings were made according to the estimated values.
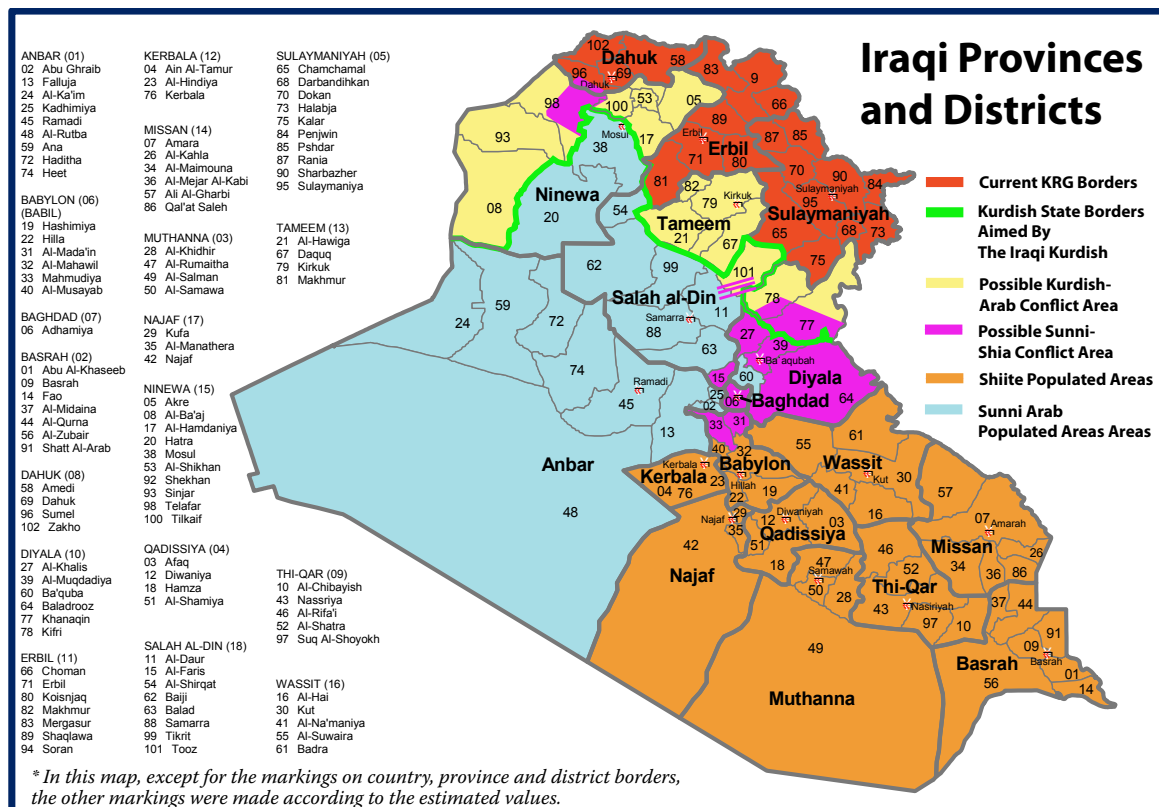
The conflicts' launching in the center will start upon the intense conflicts in the central regions of the country, and will expand upon the operations of the Kurdish, who took advantage of the weakening authority of the central authority, in the north. In this case, the possibility that especially the Sunni Ar-

abs, who will remain between the two fronts, will win the conflict is quite low. Therefore, it can be expected for the conflict to last shorter and to result in a more absolute split process.

In addition to the expectation that the conflicting parties will be composed of at least

three groups in the scenario that the country splits into three or more districts, it can also be expected that the power struggle between the Sadrist groups, in which new splits can take place especially among the Shi'ite, and the units affiliated to the Dawa Party, if it comes to power then, could turn into bloody conflicts. The major axis of the conflict would probably be between Sunni Arabs and Kurds in the north, in Mosul, Kirkuk, Diyala and Salahaddin; and between Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs in Baghdad, Diyala, Babel, Karbala, Anbar and Vasit. If ethnical and sectarian war takes place at the same time, it would probably prevent an explicit alliance among the groups; and therefore, complex network of alliances or relations could be formed among the conflicting groups. If such a scenario takes place, the current situation of the Turkmen they will be in would be extremely critical. The Turkmen can be left in the middle of the war between Kurds and Arabs, or they could fall out with each others because of the sectarian difference among themselves.

At this stage, the last point, which should be remembered, is the requirement of evaluating the attitudes of the external powers. In case a conflict environment, which leads to the possibility of split in Iraq, emerges; the policies of the U.S. and Iran will be extremely important. As these states, which are pragmatic, will want to create supportive states for themselves; they should provide explicit or implicit support to the parties of the conflict. When the split becomes inevitable, as the other party of the conflict would be either Arab nationalists or Shi'ite Arabs near Iran, whose anti-US ism is more dominant; it can be suggested that the U.S. will take side with the Kurdish, and that it will want to apply pressure on Turkey in order to protect the Kurdish region from the other states and from the conflicting parties. The scenario, according to which a Kurdish state to be established will be connected to the world through a country except for Turkey (e.g. Iran), is not a desired scenario for the U.S. This situation also goes for Israel and the European countries. Therefore, in case an internal conflict, which will lead to split, takes

place; these countries should be expected to give support to the Kurdish and to give suggestions for Turkey to help the Kurdish; and precautions should be taken accordingly. It can be suggested that Iran will try to establish a Shi'ite state, which will be close to herself and will be able to control the Basra basin. The effectiveness and the success of Iran's policy depends on how the Iraqi Shi'ite will be considered as an actor, to which extent it is acceptable or poses threat, by the other regional powers. The possibility that the Shi'ite, who conflict with the Sunni Arabs, will be supported by the Gulf countries and by Egypt is almost none. Therefore, the Iraqi Shi'ite could be pushed towards Iran, even if they do not want. Iran's attitude on the Kurds will probably change as well. Iran, which would not want a possible Kurdish state to be affected by Turkey or by the U.S.-Israel alliance, can support the Kurdish in their conflict with Sunni Arabs, instead of excluding them. As the possibility of a direct conflict in the scenario of splitting into three between the Kurdish and Shi'ite Arabs is weak for geographical reasons, there would not be a contradiction between the Iran's support for the Shi'ite Arabs and her support for the Kurdish. Therefore, in case a possible split, Turkey's cooperating with Iran and her eliminating the conflict in the region is a weak possibility. It can be thought that the Sunni Arab countries will want to take maximum advantages by extending the duration of the conflict as much as possible, by providing the Sunni Arabs with financial assistance. The Sunni Arab countries, which could be damaged the most as a result of such a conflict, are Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Jordan would have a reasonable worry about the possibility that the Sunni Arabs, who would be excluded, could join their territories and eliminate the Hashimite Dynasty. However, Israel is also against this scenario. Because she can find a hostile Jordan state, which is big and not easy to deal with, at her doorstep. As for Saudi Arabia, she will have lost power against Iran, due to the Shi'ite state to be created on the border, and also she will go through big difficulties in governing the Shi'ite minority, who live in the region where big petroleum

reserves of the Saudi Arabia are located. With regard to these hypothesis, it should be underlined that there is a very thin line between the possibility that this conflict could be cooled by the countries in the region, and the possibility that it could be aggravated by these countries; in case a conflict, which would launch the split of Iraq into three or more pieces, breaks out.

SCENARIOS ON THE FUTURE OF IRAQ

	Very Good	Good	Normal	Bad	Very Bad
Functioning of political institutions	Problems related to government were solved, the parties found what they expected and it functions without problem Laws are enacted with reconciliation	Despite the problems in functioning of the government, the problems are solved within the frame of mutual dialogues Legal problems and also problems in power distribution exist, but the assembly carries on working. Laws are enacted through the support of the majority, even if not through consensus	The parties having success in the election, do not believe that they are really represented Their trust in the elections started to decline The government goes through problems in continuing its existence The government was formed and the solution of the problems was left to time, and the fluctuating situation continues, The laws are enacted, even if through bargains.	The faith in the elections gets quite low, and the people and the political groups lose their faith in coming to power through elections, and disputes on legitimacy related to system start. The government is overthrown, new government has not been formed yet, and the formation of a new government seems quite difficult; but the search for solution within the assembly continues. The assembly faces major problems in its internal functioning; but the efforts still continue.	The people and parties have totally lost their faith in election, it is believed that the civil politics is over, The ones, whose objections are not accepted, resort to weapons in order to gain their rights The government is overthrown, some trials to form government fails The country stays without government at least for 6 months, the institutions do not function, besides, extra-assembly search is strong as it is believed that the election will not give a result The assembly has lost its function, and the decisions issued are not accepted by the groups
Nature and level of acts of violence	Political violence ended across the country and the general security level is normalized	Although incidents take place from time to time, they happen in at a dimension and area that does not affect the course	Although the incidents continue in problematic regions of the country, they can be controlled with the intervention of the army and the police	The incidents have started to turn into conflicts among ethnical and sectarian groups The area, where the incidents take place, expanded Security forces have difficulty in dealing with the situation Death toll among the military and civilians are about to reach the level in 2007	An ethnical and sectarian civil war has broken out In potential conflict areas, intense conflicts have broke out between the militia forces and the security forces or among militia forces themselves The security forces have lost the control and even they become a part of the dirty war

Military and civilian death toll and the level of the incidents have reached the level of 2006-2007. |

Functioning of Security Forces	Under the control of central government, the army and the police maintain security Local security forces carry out their duties without any discrimination. The people of the local area can be represented by the local police forces and the people feel themselves safe The Iraqi army completely does its duty and there is no any security gap	Although there are problems between the central government and federal powers, the overall security is in a good state. Some unity problems emerged in the Iraqi army, but the problem can be solved through training problems Despite problems in triple checkpoints from time to time, this situation does not affect the overall functioning	Problems between central government and federal forces still continue There are ambiguities about the authority fields and extent of the security forces; therefore arguments or conflicts take place from time to time The integration problems of formations such as Sahwa etc. into the system continue. Salaries are not paid or there are disturbances; but the break point has not been exceeded yet Upon the withdrawal of the U.S. troops, security weakness emerged especially in disputed territories; but these problems remained at a local level	The problems between the central government and federal powers are on increase There is no any progress on the integration of Sahwa in the system, disappointments start to turn into rejections, some groups start to resort to resistance The vacancy of the U.S. troops could not be filled yet, conflicts take place between security forces, affiliated to different groups, at small-scale but also at local level Ethnical and sectarian discrimination and patronage is at maximum levels, none of the groups rely on the security force of another group	Conflict broke out between the central government and the federal powers, Sunni officers and soldiers have adopted an attitude against the Shi'ite, The peshmergas, included in the army, join the Kurdish forces with their weapons The Sahwa has been armed again, and turned into a resistance The ethnical and sectarian discrimination among the security forces have become more explicit, and there is no any participation in the army and the police The armed struggle has become more explicit, the acts of violence turned into inter-group conflict out of the resistance movements Especially in disputed territories, ethnical conflict; and in southern and central parts, sectarian conflicts or conflicts within the sect broke out
Functioning of the constitutional amendment process	The Kirkuk problem is solved upon a consensus, Kirkuk was recognized as a structure affiliated to the center, The Ba'athists' return was enabled; They are in opposition but they do not get involves in violence Oil law was enacted, and the incomes are shared equally	The solution is near on Kirkuk problem, a transition period has been gone through The return of the Ba'athists has started The oil law is enacted Incomes are shared equally	There is not a difference in the solution of the Kirkuk problem compared to the current situation The Ba'athist could not be returned but the talks carry on The oil law has not been enacted yet, and the incomes are shared as they stand.	The solution in Kirkuk does not loom on the horizon; there are sidings in the assembly and the storm is about to break out The Ba'athists have up hope pn turning back The oil law has not been enacted, even the current situation started to be violated; the Kurdish receive the income of the oil they produce themselves as their own incomes.	There is no solution in Kirkuk; dispute turned into conflict The Ba'athists lost their hopes to turn back; they out the extension in the country into action The oil law was put aside International oil companies embitter the conflict environment by acting together with the local groups in Iraq

Policies of the External Powers	All of the countries in the region, UN, EU, the U.S., and other power centers carry on supporting the territorial integrity and contributing to stability	The majority of the countries in the region, the U.S., and major power centers carry on supporting the territorial integrity and contributing to stability	Some of the countries in the region, the U.S. and certain power centers carry on supporting the territorial integrity and contributing to stability; some countries in the region and power centers started to hope to take advantage of the split of Iraq	The majority of the countries in the region, UN, EU, the U.S., and other power centers believe that territorial integrity cannot be ensured The Iraqi territorial integrity is not a taboo anymore; these countries are in search of new scenarios and new quests in Iraq.	The majority of the countries in the region, UN, EU, the U.S. and other power centers believe that split of Iraq is inevitable; and they make explicit or implicit attempts for the post-split period

- In the answers given to the parameters stated on this table
- "Very good" column's predominance is the indicator of the continuation of the current situation in a way to strengthen the central authority
- "Good" column's predominance is the indicator of the continuation of the current situation
- "Normal" column's predominance is the indicator of formation of a fragile and sensitive Iraqi scenario
- "Bad" column's predominance is the indicator of a path going towards a civil war and chaos
- "Very bad" column's predominance is the indicator of a path towards split.

ENDNOTE

(1) What is meant by the north is the region, which covers the borders of the provinces of Duhok, Sulaymaniyah and Arbil being the official frontiers of the KRG, as well as some part of Kirkuk and certain parts of Mosul and Diyala over which the Iraqi central government or relevant provincial councils do not have de facto control.